

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 04413

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IR, AF
SUBJ: FURTHER REACTION TO AFGHAN COUP

REF: TEHRAN 4356

1. GOI SPOKESMAN HOMAYOUN, IN PRESS BIEFING FOLLOWING CABINET SESSION MAY 8, SAID THAT PRESERVATION OF AFGHANISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE GROWING PROSPERITY OF ITS PEOPLE WERE STILL THE TWO MAIN PRINCIPLES OF IRAN'S POLICY TOWARD THAT COUNTRY. HE ADDED THAT THE FUTURE COURSE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD DEPEND ON SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS, I.E., "THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN POWER FOR ONLY A SHORT TIME AND NATUALLY HAS BEEN BUSY ATTENDING TO ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IT IS THEREFORE TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT IRANO-AFGHAN RELATIONS AT THIS STAGE."

2. FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY, JOURNAL DE TEHRAN, CARRIED EDITORIAL MAY 9 ON THE FUTURE RELATIONS OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN. WITH THE VISIT OF PAK FOREIGN ADVISER AGHA
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SHAHI AS BACKGROUND THE EDITORIAL CONTRASTS THE RELATIONS OF IRAN AND PAKISTAN WITH THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, NOTING IT IS A "DEMOSCRATIC REPUBLIC" AND NOT "SOCIALIST PEOPLES", BUT NEVERTHELESS BY THE VERY FACT THE NEW AFGHAN LEADERSHIP BELONGS TO COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS, WHATEVER THEIR OFFICIAL APPELLATION, AMOUNTS TO A REAL CHANGE OF REGIME MUCH GREATER THAN THAT IN 1973. OTHER EXCERPTS

FROM LENGTHY EDITORIAL FOLLOW:

A. " THE NEW REGIME HAS SPREAD SLOGANS RESPECTING THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM WHICH ARE MEANT TO WIN THE ALLIANCE OF THE PROFOUNDLY RELIGIOUS AFGHAN POPULATION AS WELL AS EXTINGUISH FEARS OF ITS NEIGHBORS."

B. "IN PEACEFUL TIMES IRAN IS LESS MENACED THAN PAKISTAN BECAUSE THERE ARE NO TERRITORIAL DISPUTES BETWEEN OUR COUNTRY AND AFGHANISTAN. THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN IRAN IS SUCH THAT TROUBLES, EVEN OVER THE FRONTIER, WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE POLITICAL STABILITY OF OUR COUNTRY."

C. "IT IS OTHERWISE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN. THEY POSE THE THORNY QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF PUSTUNISTAN. HOWEVER, AS MOHAMMAD DAOUD APPEARS TO HAVE PROMISED ISLAMABAD, DISSENSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES CAN BE MUTED. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO JUDGE THE ATTITUDE OF THE NEW AFGHAN LEADERS, BUT SHOULD DIFFICULTIES BREAK OUT BETWEEN ISLAMABAD AND KABUL FOR OTHER REASONS, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FAIL TO USE THE PUSHTUNISTAN TRUP CARD TO PROVOKE TROUBLE IN PAKISTAN WHOSE POLITICAL STABILITY, WH THE BHUTTO AFFAIR SO MISHANDLED, IS PRECARIOUS."

D. "BEFORE BHUTTO VARIOUS PAK GOVERNMENTS HAD TRIED BY FORCE OF ARMS TO BRING THE POPULATION OF THOSE REGIONS TO HEEL. THE RESULT HAS ONLY BEEN TO CREATE TENACIOUS HATRED OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, IF KABUL HOLDS A CONFIDENTIAL

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TRUP IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, PAKISTAN ON ITS SIDE, BY PROHIBITING AFGHAN IMPORTS AND EXPORTS ACROSS ITS TERRITORY, CAN PROVOKE THE MOST SERIOUS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FOR ITS AFGHAN NEIGHBOR."

5. COMMENT: ABOVE EDITORIAL ANALYSIS CONTAINS GENEROUS MEASURES OF CAUTION, PROFESSED SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PERHAPS SOME WISHFUL THINKING. THE EMPHASIS ON BHUTTO'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT GOI IS KEEPING UP ITS PRESSURE ON GOP AGAINST HIS EXECUTION. INTERESTINGLY, REFTEL INDICATES THAT PAKS BELIEVE BALUCHIS, RATHER THAN PUSHTUS, ARE THE AFGHANS' PRIME TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY. SINCE BALUCHIS ALSO LIVE IN IRAN, THAT MAY SIMPLY BE A PLOY TO HELP CONCENTRATE IRAN'S ATTENTION ON THE PROBLEM.
SULLIVAN

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